



# Hampton Police Division Media Release

40 Lincoln Street  
Hampton, VA 23669  
757-727-6638



**For Immediate Release**

**April 24, 2005**

## **DEATH INVESTIGATION**

On April 23, 2005, at approximately 8:56 am, police responded to a deceased person located in the parking lot of the Phoebus Ball Field located at South Willard and County Street. Officers arrived and located Robert Jerome Smith, a 43 year old without a permanent address, lying in the parking partially clothed, and without external signs of trauma.

The investigation determined that Samuel Lee Etheridge and Robert Jerome Small were staying at the Buckroe Motel, located at 1512 East Pembroke Avenue, consuming illegal narcotics when Small suffered a medical crisis. Rather than summoning emergency medial personnel, Etheridge solicited the assistance of William Taylor Ruhle to remove the remains. Etheridge and Ruhle clothed the victim, placed him in a vehicle, and left his remains in the parking lot of the Phoebus Baseball Field.

Detectives charged **Samuel Lee Etheridge**, a 39 year old residing in the 200 block of E.R. Daniels Road in Wancheese North Carolina and **William Taylor Ruhle**, a 45 year old residing in the first block of Bay View in Maneo North Carolina, with illegally disposing of human remains. The investigation is ongoing.



**Samuel Lee Etheridge**



**William Taylor Ruhle**

Corporal Jimmie Wideman will receive questions about this release at 757-727-6638.

##### END #####